

FINLAND 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Finland is a constitutional republic with a directly elected president and a unicameral parliament (*Eduskunta*). The prime minister heads a five-party coalition government approved by parliament and appointed by the president in 2019. The parliamentary election in 2019 and the presidential election in 2018 were considered free and fair.

The National Police maintains internal security. Both Finnish Customs and the Border Guard have law enforcement responsibilities related to their fields of responsibility. The Border Guard has additional law enforcement powers to maintain public order when it operates in joint patrols and under police command. The Defense Forces are responsible for safeguarding the country's territorial integrity and providing military training. The Defense Forces also have some domestic security responsibilities, such as assisting the National Police in maintaining law and order in crises. The National Police and Border Guard report to the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for police oversight, law enforcement, and maintenance of order; the Ministry of Defense oversees the Defense Forces. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over security forces. There were no reports members of the security forces committed abuses.

There were no reports of significant human rights abuses.

The government had mechanisms in place to identify and punish officials who may commit human rights abuses or engage in corruption.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person

a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and Other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings

There were no reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Other Related Abuses

The constitution and law prohibit such practices, and there were no reports government officials employed them.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

There were no significant reports regarding prison or detention center conditions that raised human rights concerns.

Abusive Physical Conditions: Prison authorities and researchers stated a lack of human resources, insufficient security investigation procedures, and out-of-date security equipment continued to contribute to incidences of inmate violence and the rise of organized criminal groups operating in prisons or attempting to infiltrate prison staff. In May two inmates were tried for murder and aggravated rape in the death of a man, age 21, in a temporary holding “travel cell” of Vantaa prison in January. The case remained pending at year’s end.

Administration: Authorities conducted investigations of credible allegations of mistreatment.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted monitoring visits by independent human rights observers.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

The law requires police to have a warrant issued by a prosecutor to make an arrest.

Police must obtain a warrant within three days if an individual is arrested while committing a crime. Arrested persons must receive a court hearing within three days of arrest, and police must promptly inform detainees of the charges against them. Authorities respected most of these rights. Most defendants awaiting trial are eligible for conditional release on personal recognizance. Detainees generally have access to a lawyer promptly after arrest. Persons detained for “minor” criminal offenses, however, do not have a right to an attorney from the outset of detention or prior to interrogation. The government must provide lawyers for the indigent. A May 2021 Committee for the Prevention of Torture report noted delays in notification of custody were “frequent and widespread” and could be delayed up to 96 hours, especially if the detainee was a foreigner. Civil society groups reported these delays continued during the year and noted there continued to be insufficient translation and interpretation services.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence and impartiality.

Trial Procedures

The constitution and law provide for the right to a fair and public trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right.

A June 28 report by public broadcaster Yle revealed a significant backlog of cases under prosecution leading to long pretrial investigation and trial delays. The average processing time for aggravated theft cases during the year was nearly twice as long as the average processing time in 2014.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

Individuals or organizations may seek civil remedies through domestic courts for human rights abuses. After they exhaust all avenues of appeal in national courts, persons and organizations may appeal court decisions involving alleged violations

of the European Convention on Human Rights to the European Court of Human Rights.

Property Seizure and Restitution

The government reported the country did not confiscate property belonging to Jews during the Holocaust era, that Holocaust-era restitution has not been an issue, and that no litigation or restitution claims were pending before authorities regarding real or immovable property covered by the 2009 report *Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues*, which the government endorsed. While there were no known claims for movable Judaica or Jewish cultural property confiscated during the Holocaust era, journalists and representatives of the Jewish community stated they had no information as to the whereabouts of movable property of Central European Jews who had fled to Finland whom Finnish security services later deported. On January 17, participants from five local museums, the Finnish Museums' Association, and the Finnish Heritage Agency held a roundtable discussion on questions concerning art provenance.

The Department of State's *Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act* report to Congress, released publicly in July 2020, can be found on the Department's website: <https://www.state.gov/reports/just-act-report-to-congress/>.

f. Arbitrary or Unlawful Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The constitution and law prohibit such actions, and there were no reports the government failed to respect these prohibitions.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties

a. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media

The constitution and law provide for freedom of expression, including for the press, and the government generally respected this right. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for members of the media.

Freedom of Expression: Public speech intended to incite discrimination against any national, racial, religious, or ethnic group is a crime. Hate speech is not a separate criminal offense but may constitute grounds for an aggravated sentence for other offenses. On March 30, Helsinki District Court dismissed all three charges against Christian Democrat Member of Parliament and former Minister of the Interior Päivi Räsänen, whose trial centered on written and verbal statements concerning homosexuality and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) persons. While the court noted the statements underlying the charges were offensive, it found that the statements did not reach a level of incitement to hatred outside the protection of freedom of expression.

Censorship or Content Restrictions for Members of the Press and Other Media, Including Online Media: On August 25, the Helsinki District Court began proceedings in the case against the daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat's reporters, Laura Halminen and Tuomo Pietilainen, and editor of the political news department Kalle Silfverberg on charges of disclosure of state secrets and attempted disclosure of state secrets for an in-depth report published in 2017 on an intelligence facility located in the country. If convicted, the employees face a minimum of four months and maximum of four years in prison. The Union of Journalists in Finland raised strong concerns regarding the case's impact on freedom of the press and content censorship.

Libel/Slander Laws: Conviction of defamation and aggravated defamation carries a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment and a monetary fine. The law has a section relating to breaches of the sanctity of religion (blasphemy) that includes publicly blaspheming against God and for the purpose of offending, publicly defaming, or desecrating what is held to be sacred by a church or religious community. Conviction carries a penalty of up to six months' imprisonment and a monetary fine.

Nongovernmental Impact: Journalists who covered sensitive topics, including immigration, far-right organizations, Russia, and terrorism, reported harassment by private entities, including being targeted for defamation.

On January 11, the Supreme Court overturned the 2019 defamation conviction of journalist Johanna Vehkoo, who made statements calling Oulu city Council

member Junes Lokka a “racist” and a “Nazi clown.” Vehkoo has described her legal battles as a continuation of in-person and online harassment targeting her and her work as a journalist. On February 22, the Supreme Court sentenced Johan Backman to a 60-day suspended prison sentence for harassment of reporter Jessikka Aro from 2014 through 2016 following her reporting on pro-Russian troll factories.

Internet Freedom

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority.

b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The constitution and law provide for the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights.

Freedom of Assembly

On June 3, prosecutors filed charges against seven police officers for using pepper spray on peaceful protesters of the environmental group Extinction Rebellion Finland during a demonstration in autumn 2020. Amnesty International highlighted that police have increasingly targeted nonviolent actions and civil disobedience by activists with measures that may affect the realization of the right to peaceful assembly, including failure to inform activists in a timely manner that they were under arrest or using misleading statements in public reporting.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State’s *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

d. Freedom of Movement and the Right to Leave the Country

The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these related rights. The government continued to accept returned asylum seekers who had first

entered the country but then moved on to other European countries according to the Dublin III Regulation.

Exile: From 2019 through July, the government repatriated more than 30 persons, including 20 children from Syria who were displaced when ISIS collapsed. According to reports, at least four women and 11 children of those repatriated had left the al-Hol camp on their own without government assistance. A special envoy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated an additional three women and seven children were in al-Hol.

e. Protection of Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. Populations of concern have access to education for the purposes of learning and cultural integration. Asylum seekers have well-defined health-care services managed by the Finnish Immigration Service. Rules and processes regarding the right to work for asylum seekers are well defined.

Access to Asylum: The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees. Parliament sets an annual quota for refugee admissions, and the government decides its allocation. Asylum seekers have the right to free legal representation throughout their application procedure. According to civil society organizations, asylum seekers continued to lack adequate access to legal assistance during the initial stages of the asylum application process and during subsequent appeals.

On July 15, a law came into force that allows the government to shut down borders or restrict border crossings and centralize asylum applications to a specific border crossing location during exceptional circumstances such as an exceptionally large number of immigrants occurring in a short period of time or justified suspicion or knowledge that a foreign state or other actor is organizing border crossings.

In its *Annual Report to Parliament* released to the public in March, the nondiscrimination ombudsman stated many persons in vulnerable positions suffered from deficiencies in the asylum procedures between 2015 and 2016 and

approximately 3,000 individuals who applied for asylum during this timeframe remained in the asylum process or undocumented and outside the asylum system. The report notes, among other matters, the right of a child residing in the country not to be separated from parents may be left unfulfilled if the parents' income is deemed too low. The report also notes the threshold for granting a residence permit based on health grounds and ties to the country rose because legislation did not provide effective tools for applying residence permit laws in a way that was favorable to the applicant.

The local branch of Amnesty International and the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman highlighted in their annual reports both process and outcomes of family reunification cases put children's rights at risk, and legislative and practical obstacles, including high income requirements, continued to impede family reunification. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman noted long-term restrictions on processing visa applications for family reunification that began during the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated delays and challenges with family reunification.

Refoulement: According to its annual report, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman monitored 212 operations of the enforcement of removal from the country between 2014 and 2021. The report highlights that while operations have improved in their consideration of fundamental rights and nonrefoulement, return practices vary including the identification of vulnerable persons. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman found in some cases the vulnerability of persons being returned was not identified and authorities do not have clear structures or instructions for preparing for the return of those in a vulnerable situation.

The number of Russian-origin members of Jehovah's Witnesses applying for asylum based on alleged religious persecution declined significantly. The Finnish Immigration Service rejected more than 50 percent of the claims by members of Jehovah's Witnesses and did not consider membership in the church alone to be sufficient basis for an asylum claim. During the first half of the year, nine asylum applications by members of Jehovah's Witnesses were pending before the Supreme Administrative Court. According to church representatives, four asylum-seeking families or persons who identified as members of Jehovah's Witnesses and faced deportation to Russia during the year received positive interim decisions by the UN Human Rights Committee, thereby halting deportation proceedings.

Durable Solutions: According to the Finnish Immigration Service, the government planned to accept 1,500 quota refugees during the year. The government also assisted in the safe, voluntary return of migrants to their home countries.

Temporary Protection: From February to August, the government received 35,074 applications for temporary protection from Ukrainians. One third of the applicants were children. As of August 8, there were 37,000 persons registered in the Finnish Immigration Service asylum reception system. Over the same period, the Finnish Immigration Service made 33,231 positive decisions and 149 negative decisions. Most negative decisions were for applicants who were nationals of countries other than Ukraine or because the application had expired. Temporary protection may be granted to Ukrainian citizens unable to return to Ukraine and citizens of countries outside the European Union and stateless persons who have fled the Russian invasion if they had resided in Ukraine legally and return to the relevant country of origin safely and permanently is not possible. Temporary protection may also be granted to the family members of those granted international protection if the family ties were established in Ukraine before the Russian invasion.

f. Status and Treatment of Internally Displaced Persons

Not applicable.

g. Stateless Persons

According to the UNHCR *Finland Fact Sheet* published in February, 3,416 stateless persons resided in the country. The origin and causes of statelessness mainly originate outside of the country. Involuntarily stateless persons and certain other special groups, such as refugees, have a shorter residency requirement (four years instead of six years) than other persons before they are eligible to apply for citizenship. A child may obtain citizenship from either the mother or father regardless of the child's place of birth and may also acquire citizenship if the child is born in the country and would otherwise be stateless.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution and law provide citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: The country's national parliamentary election in 2019 and the presidential election in 2018 were considered free and fair.

Participation of Women and Members of Minority Groups: No laws limit participation of women and members of minorities in the political process, and they did participate.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented these laws effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption.

Section 5. Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

Several domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were often cooperative and responsive to their views.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The Human Rights Center is an autonomous, independent institution administratively connected to the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The center's functions include promoting the implementation of human rights, reporting on the implementation of human rights obligations, and cooperating with European and international bodies on human rights matters. The center does not have authority to investigate individual human

rights abuses. A delegation of representatives from civil society who participated in promoting and safeguarding human rights frequently cooperated with the center.

The parliamentary Constitutional Law Committee analyzes proposed legislation for consistency with international human rights conventions. The committee deals with legislation relating to criminal and procedural law, the courts, and the prison system.

The law requires the Ombudsman for Children, the Ombudsman for Older People, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, and the Ombudsman for Equality impartially to advance the status and legal protection of their respective reference groups.

These ombudsmen operate independently, but they are organized under the Ministry of Justice. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Equality oversee that government authorities at the municipal, regional, and ministerial level comply with the laws on equality and nondiscrimination. The Chancellor of Justice supervises the decisions of the government. Responsibility for investigating employment discrimination rests solely with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Responsibility for developing antidiscrimination policies and legislation as well as for the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations resides with the Ministry of Justice's Unit for Democracy, Language Affairs, and Fundamental Rights. The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations advocates for policy changes to improve integration.

The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman also operated as an independent government oversight body that investigates discrimination complaints and promotes equal treatment within the government. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman also acted as the national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings and supervised the government's removal of foreign nationals from the country.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman enjoyed the government's cooperation, operated without government or party interference, and had adequate resources. The Parliamentary Ombudsman investigates complaints that a public authority or official failed to observe the law, to fulfill a duty, or appropriately to implement fundamental human rights protections.

Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape of a person, regardless of gender, including spousal rape, and the government enforced the law effectively. Rape is punishable by up to six years' imprisonment. If the offender used violence, the offense is considered aggravated, and the penalty may be up to 10 years. All sexual offenses against adults, except sexual harassment, are subject to public prosecution. Sexual offenses against a defenseless person (such as because of unconsciousness, intoxication, or a disability) are considered as severe as rape.

Authorities may prosecute domestic abuse under various criminal laws, including as rape, assault and battery, harassment, and disturbing the peace. The penalty for physical domestic violence ranges from a minimum of six months to a maximum of 10 years in prison.

On June 27, parliament passed a reform of the criminal code on sex offenses. According to the law scheduled to come into force January 1, 2023, the legal definition of rape includes sex without consent. Under the prior law, the legal definition of rape emphasized intentional violence. In cases of rape or suspected rape, police must inquire on a party's willingness to participate in reconciliation, which is usually engaged in before the case proceeds to the prosecutor. Reconciliation may be grounds for the prosecutor not to press charges, but even reconciliation where a mutual agreement has been reached does not prevent the prosecutor from pressing charges.

Gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic and intimate partner violence, continued to be a problem. The local branch of Amnesty International estimated more than 146,000 persons experienced GBV annually, 76 percent of whom were women. According to Amnesty International, only 10 percent of these incidents were reported to authorities and most of those reported did not lead to prosecution. While police are obligated to investigate domestic violence cases, many of the cases are referred to a mediator after which police do not closely track the cases. A January 16 report in *Helsingin Sanomat* detailed long-standing and systemic

problems with the investigation and prosecution of cases of GBV. In several cases, reporters found police did not interview witnesses or waited more than two years to interrogate suspects. In some cases, prosecutors did not press charges despite clear video evidence. As a result of the report, the deputy chancellor of justice has started an investigation into these failures.

The government funded shelters specifically for survivors of domestic violence. There were 29 shelters for survivors of domestic violence, and the number of places available in shelters throughout the country could accommodate 211 families or clients arriving alone, down from 231 in 2020. The local branch of Amnesty International stated 550 places were needed to support the number of survivors properly and that some rural areas had very few shelters and insufficient space in those shelters. The Human Rights Center acknowledged the problem.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): FGM/C is treated as aggravated assault under the law and may be punished with imprisonment or deportation. Taking a girl living in the country abroad for FGM/C is also considered a crime. The government generally enforced the law. A school health survey released by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare in 2020, the most recent data available, found 0.2 percent of girls attending high school or vocational school had undergone FGM/C and at least 10 girls who were born in the country to parents born abroad reported being subjected to FGM/C. The population that most reported having undergone FGM/C were Somali-born residents.

Sexual Harassment: The law defines sexual harassment as a specific, punishable offense with penalties ranging from fines to up to six months' imprisonment. Employers who fail to protect employees from workplace harassment are subject to the same penalties. Under the law, survivors may also seek compensation from the discriminating party, such as the employer, school, or provider of goods and services, if they are liable for harassment or have failed to take action to stop harassment after they have become aware of it. The prosecutor general is responsible for investigating sexual harassment complaints. The government generally enforced the law.

Reproductive Rights: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

The law requires that a transgender person present a medical certificate of infertility before the government may legally recognize their gender identity (see Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics, below, for additional information.)

The government provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence, and emergency contraception was available as part of the clinical management of rape.

Discrimination: The law provides for the same legal status and rights for women as for men. The government enforced the law effectively, but instances of discrimination occurred. Pregnant women experienced discrimination in finding a job, returning from leave, and renewing fixed-term contracts. The Ombudsman for Equality stated women were disproportionally placed on fixed-term contracts, which employers did not renew or renewed at lower levels of pay and responsibility after childbirth (see also section 7.d.).

Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination

The law specifically prohibits discrimination based on origin and nationality.

In January, the Helsinki Police Department dismissed an additional police officer and issued a warning to one guard in a case connecting department officers to hate groups. In July 2021, the public broadcaster Yle reported the Helsinki Police Department fired two officers, including the chief of staff, for engaging in racist communications with far-right hate groups. Text messages revealed discussion of an upcoming “civil war,” with language particularly targeting the country’s Muslim, Somali, and Romani populations.

In September, the Supreme Administrative Court ruled the Helsinki Police Department had engaged in ethnic profiling and discriminated against two women in 2016 when they were stopped by police officers on suspicion of engaging in commercial sex. In 2021, the chief inspector of the Ombudsman for Equality confirmed security officials, including police, were observed profiling and discriminating against individuals based on their ethnicity.

Roma continued to face discrimination in all social sectors and were often targeted by law enforcement and security officials. Housing discrimination acutely affected Romani populations, but instances of housing discrimination for Roma were likely underreported. Romani populations reported instances of hate speech and refusal of service for Roma in restaurants and businesses.

According to statistics from the *Fundamental Rights Barometer Survey 2021*, 36 percent of Arabic-speaking respondents and 31 percent of Russian-speaking respondents experienced discrimination during employment or while searching for a job.

According to a university researcher and officials at the Ministry of Education, students were often placed in Finnish-as-a-second-language classes regardless of their Finnish proficiency if their native language on record was something other than Finnish or if they had a “non-Finnish” name. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman also reported instances of structural discrimination in basic and vocational education directing youth assumed to have an immigrant background towards certain fields involving manual labor.

The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman is responsible for responding to complaints of discrimination and regularly mediated among business owners, government agencies, and public service providers regarding treatment of customers and clients. The Ministry of Justice also responds to complaints of discrimination.

The government strongly encouraged tolerance and respect for minority groups, sought to address racial discrimination, and assisted victims. The government invested in antiracism training for government employees, teachers, and professionals working in the social welfare and health-care sector.

Researchers studying extremism reported the banned Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) continued to operate out of public sight through changing organizational forms and associations. Academic researchers have highlighted that while the ban has led to a significant decrease in organized, public events centered on racially or ethnically motivated violent rhetoric, it has driven some former members of the NRM to increased radicalization through unregulated online forums. In February, prosecutors charged five NRM members with incitement for activities organized

under the group “Toward Freedom!”. In 2021, prosecutors charged nine members of Toward Freedom! including all five NRM members facing incitement charges, with illegal association for continuing the activities of the NRM under alternative organizational structures. The Finnish Intelligence Service highlighted in its annual terrorist threat assessment that racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism in online platforms was a significant source of radicalization in the country and that ethnic minorities were at risk of being targeted by violence perpetrated by lone far-right individuals. Leaders in both the Jewish and the Muslim minority communities stated the types of websites and forums targeting citizens expanded during the prior year.

Indigenous Peoples

The constitution provides for the protection of the Sami language and culture, and the government financially supported these efforts. The Sami, who constituted less than 0.1 percent of the population, have full political and civil rights as citizens as well as a measure of autonomy in their civil and administrative affairs. A 21-member Sami Parliament (*Samediggi*), popularly elected by the Sami, is responsible for the group’s language, culture, and matters concerning their status as an Indigenous people. It may adopt legally binding resolutions, propose initiatives, and provide policy guidance.

Members of the Sami Council, a voluntary Sami nongovernmental organization (NGO) made up of Sami member organizations from Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden, highlighted Sami self-determination matters as a continuing human rights concern in the country. In the 2015 Sami Parliament elections, the country’s Supreme Administrative Court ordered names added to the electoral roll. Sami leaders noted those whose names were added by the court were not affiliated with Sami identity and culture. Sami community representatives added that self-determination and the ability to determine membership in accordance with Sami customs and traditions was an important right that further underpinned other rights governing land use, cultural traditions, and practices.

Reports issued by the Sami Parliament in February and December 2020 stated the linguistic rights of the Sami were not realized in the way intended by the constitution and the Sami Language Law. Shortcomings involved the number of

Sami language personnel, the accessibility of services, and the fact that, contrary to provisions of the Sami Language Law, Sami persons must still separately invoke their linguistic rights for them to be recognized. Speakers of Inari Sami and Skolt Sami were in the most vulnerable positions, according to the report. Funds appropriated for Sami language social services and health care have not been indexed to inflation since 2004. There was also poor availability of Sami language prekindergarten personnel, and the funding of Sami language prekindergarten programs was inadequate. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, the Ministry of Education, and Sami leaders all noted a lack of professionals and authorities with Sami language skills working in Sami regions, including health-care service providers, teachers, and interpreters. In addition, as services were moved online and to centralized service telephone lines, authorities did not take into consideration the possibility of accessing these services in the Sami languages.

The Ombudsman for Equality stated Sami victims of domestic violence were at a disadvantage in accessing public shelters due to the long distances between population centers in the northern part of the country.

In May, Miina Suerujarvi stepped down as the Commissioner of the Sami Truth and Reconciliation Commission, suspending the body that had formed in December 2021 after two years of delays. Sami community members expressed deep concerns with the commission's lack of financial support, lack of Sami community expertise, and the lack of appropriate mental health and support resources. While the government has reiterated its commitment to the commission and reconciliation, Sami Council members stated there remained a lack of faith in the process in the Sami community.

In April, the Supreme Court ruled two Sami individuals were not legally responsible for having violated a salmon fishing ban. The court found that while the constitutionally protected fishing rights of the Sami community were not absolute and could be restricted to protect migratory fish stock, the impact of the total ban on Sami culture was not proportionate to the benefits of the ban. Representatives of Sami communities stated the court's ruling had not been effectively incorporated into government regulations, leading to significant uncertainty in the Sami community and preventing some Sami communities from exercising their cultural rights. Sami leaders also noted they lacked effective

participation in the decision-making and enforcement of fishing decisions that impact Sami lands.

The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman and educators warned of rising discrimination and hate speech targeting Sami persons, particularly in educational settings.

Children

Birth Registration: A child generally acquires citizenship at birth through one or both parents. A child may also acquire citizenship at birth if the child is born in the country and meets certain other criteria, such as if the parents have refugee status in the country or if the child is not eligible for any other country's citizenship. A local registration office records all births immediately.

Child Abuse: The law prohibits child abuse, defining children as individuals younger than 16. Child neglect and physical or psychological violence carry penalties of up to six months in prison and up to two years in prison, respectively. Sexual abuse of a child carries a minimum penalty of four months' imprisonment and a maximum of six years. The law defines rape of a child (younger than 18) as aggravated rape. Rape of a child carries a minimum penalty of two years' and a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment. Aggravated rape of a child carries a minimum penalty of four years' and a maximum of 12 years' imprisonment.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: The minimum age of marriage is 18; the law disallows marriage of individuals younger than that age. In the first half of the year, the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking reported 37 cases of forced marriage and noted many instances of forced marriage occurred outside of the country. In 2021, the system assisted 63 women and girls considered to have been subjected to forced marriage, an increase from 2020. Many of these marriages occurred when the women and girls were underage. NGOs working with LGBTQI+ and immigrant populations highlighted statistics likely undercount actual cases of forced marriage and LGBTQI+ individuals in religious immigrant, refugee, and asylee communities were vulnerable to forced marriages.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The country prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including child pornography and the sale, offering, or

procuring of children for commercial sex. The law prohibits purchase of sexual services from minors and covers “grooming” (enticement of a child), including in a virtual environment or through mobile telephone contacts. Authorities enforced the law effectively.

The minimum age for consensual sex is 16. The law regards a person whose age cannot be determined, but who may reasonably be assumed to be younger than 18, as a child.

From January to March, there were 760 reported cases of child exploitation, compared with 440 cases reported during the same period in 2021.

Institutionalized Children: In 2021, the latest year for which data are available, 1 percent of children age 17 or younger were placed in care services. From 2000 to 2021 the clients of all ages with disabilities receiving assisted living care increased by 6 percent per year while those in institutional care decreased by 8 percent per year. As of 2021, 172 persons with disabilities younger than age of 18 were in long-term institutional care. Accessibility and children’s rights advocates have raised the issue that differences in care across municipalities lead to children in institutional care facilities having reduced access to education or appropriate psychological care.

Antisemitism

According to recent studies, the size of the Jewish population was 1,300, most living in the Helsinki area. Leaders in the Jewish community suggested the number is closer to 2,000.

Stickers and posters with antisemitic images and messages were placed near the synagogue of Helsinki’s Jewish congregation, in neighborhoods with significant Jewish populations, and on public property throughout the year. The vandalism ranged from targeted to apparently random, and similar incidents occurred numerous times during the previous four years. Representatives of the Jewish community reported that, despite available video and photographic evidence of the perpetrators, police made no arrests in the incidents. Antisemitic websites, Holocaust-distortion websites, and online hate speech targeting the Jewish community or spreading antisemitic conspiracy theories increased throughout the

year.

Debates on religious practices of animal slaughter with respect to kosher products and on nonmedical male circumcision often used direct or veiled antisemitic language (see Other Societal Violence or Discrimination, below).

The government provided funding for the security of the Helsinki synagogue. Representatives of the Jewish community reported feeling under threat and specifically targeted due to their beliefs.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics

Criminalization: There are no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults. Gender-neutral marriage laws came into force in 2017.

Violence against LGBTQI+ Persons: In July, a homemade bomb exploded in the hall of the public library during the city of Lapua's first-ever Pride celebration. Nobody was injured, and authorities are still investigating the motive for the incident. In 2020, the latest year for which statistics are available, police recorded 68 of 852 suspected hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression out of 852. These statistics include threats and harassment in addition to assault and violent crimes. LGBTQI+ rights advocates stated instances of hate crimes targeting LGBTQI+ persons were significantly underreported due to a lack of trust between victims and authorities and some reported hate crimes were not investigated because police lacked training and resources needed to recognize and investigate hate crimes.

Discrimination: The law prohibits discrimination by state and nonstate actors based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics and recognizes LGBTQI+ individuals and couples. LGBTQI+

persons continued to report incidences of harassment and discrimination in public. In a poll by public broadcaster Yle, 22 of 25 respondents who worked organizing Pride events reported facing offensive speech, vandalism, or theft.

Availability of Legal Gender Recognition: The country legally recognizes two genders: male and female. The law requires an individual who wishes to have legal recognition of another gender be at age 18 or older, undergo medical sterilization or otherwise be unable to reproduce, submit to psychiatric monitoring that may last three years, and obtain a medical statement certifying they believe they belong to the “opposite” gender.

Medical treatment guidelines for transgender persons younger than age of 25 recommend first-line treatment of psychosocial support for “dysphoria related to gender variance.” Guidelines state medical intervention should only be considered on a case-by-case basis. Minors do not have the ability to receive legal gender recognition, even with the permission of parents or guardians.

Involuntary or Coercive Medical or Psychological Practices Specifically Targeting LGBTQI+ Individuals: The law requires that a transgender person present a medical statement affirming the individual’s gender identity and a certificate of infertility before the government may legally recognize their gender identity. To obtain a statement that includes an affirmation of gender, transgender persons must first undergo a psychiatric monitoring process and receive a psychiatric diagnosis, a process organizations, activists, and transgender persons criticized as causing significant harm, distress, and humiliation. Access to specialized treatment services is only available two years after a diagnosis of “gender dysphoria,” thereby creating barriers to gender-affirming procedures.

In addition to the requirement that an individual submit to sterilization, activists criticized the duration of the legal process, stating it could take up to three years to obtain identity documents with changed gender markers. A survey by LGBTQI+ rights organizations reported nearly all individuals identifying as transgender had to wait one to two years to access gender-affirming medical care and some had to wait as long as 10 years for access to medical care. Individuals listed financial burdens, lack of appropriate information, wait times, and lack of trust in certain medical providers as barriers to trans-inclusive medical care. Antitrafficking

authorities and civil society stated they had no specialized services for transgender victims of trafficking in persons and were unaware of their status among the trafficking-victim population.

While the law prohibits “conversion therapy” in clinical medical settings, “conversion therapy” and other “conversion” practices to attempt to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression are legal in all other settings and continue to be practiced. According to local activists, children in the Pentecostal Church community continued to be provided material that encourage sexual orientation “conversion.” Academic experts stated that although “conversion therapy” is not practiced in medical settings and because the practice is not banned in the country, it is difficult to identify which “conversion” practices are most prevalent. Activists working with immigrant communities highlighted that honor-related violence, forced marriage, and forced exile, or the threat of such actions, were also used as part of broader “conversion therapy” practices in immigrant and refugee communities throughout the year.

Medical practitioners in some clinical settings subjected intersex children to nonurgent or medically unnecessary procedures without their or their parents’ informed consent. Advocates working with LGBTQI+ organizations stated the country’s laws were insufficient for protecting the rights of intersex children and noted a lack of sufficient training and information for health-care professionals and parents.

Restrictions of Freedom of Expression, Association, or Peaceful Assembly:

There were no restrictions on freedoms of expression, association, or assembly on LGBTQI+ persons or those advocating for LGBTQI+ rights.

Persons with Disabilities

The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, disability advocates, and persons with disabilities all reported there were barriers to persons with disabilities accessing education, health services, public buildings, and transportation on an equal basis with others. The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in all fields, including the provision of government services. The law includes an obligation to make reasonable accommodations in situations in which

the conditions do not otherwise allow persons with disabilities to engage with an authority or authorities or receive education, employment, and generally available goods and services on an equal basis with others. The law also refers to adapting services in individual cases based on the stated or demonstrated needs of the person with a disability. The law, however, does not impose an obligation to prepare proactively for the needs of persons with disabilities. Disability advocates stated there were no efficient legal mechanisms to address accessibility matters, noting long trial delays and unclear regulations meant that it could take years to resolve even the simplest of accessibility disputes.

The government committed resources to strengthening the rights of patients with disabilities to self-determination for psychological and medical care and the conditions for the use of restraint measures. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health opened a comment period between June 10 and July 31 on regulations regarding legal remedies in cases of involuntary medication for psychiatric treatment. Disability rights activists stated the government's process helped promote a better understanding of the problems and rights of persons with mental or developmental disabilities.

According to a survey by the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman published in March, 90 percent of persons with disabilities responded they were generally discriminated against in employment, and more than 60 percent of respondents stated they faced discrimination when looking for a job. The Ministry of Interior stated only two police officers in the country were able to communicate in sign language and that access to services for persons with disabilities continued to be a problem. There were no existing comprehensive assessments of the state of accessibility of public buildings. According to an estimate from 2019, the most recent data available, 15 percent of residential buildings were accessible. Municipalities must organize reasonable transport services for persons with disabilities if they are needed to manage daily life functions. Municipalities reported problems in the availability and quality of transport services, particularly during major events, on-call times, and evenings and weekends.

According to the Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD), most children with disabilities were included in early childhood education in the same classes as other children. In primary schools,

there were fewer opportunities for children with disabilities to attend classes or participate in organized hobby groups with peers. The resources available varied across different municipalities. The law requires an authority, education provider, employer, or provider of goods to afford equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to deal with government officials, gain access to education, and work through reasonable accommodations. According to civil society groups, municipalities routinely did not budget enough money to provide such services and provided only the minimum services required by law regardless of the actual need. Due to a lack of accessible information, some persons may not be aware of the minimum services provided for by law.

Experts from civil society groups asserted legislation and practices surrounding labor and daily activities of persons with mental disabilities needed comprehensive reform. Gaps in the law created conditions where businesses could employ persons with disabilities for so-called rehabilitative work without pay. The system does not take into consideration that individuals with intellectual disabilities are often capable of full- or part-time work on the same basis as others. According to FAIDD, only 400 of the approximately 25,000 to 30,000 persons of working age with disabilities engaged in paid work. Social welfare legislation defines labor activities as maintaining and improving capabilities, and a municipality may grant tax-free pay of between zero and €12 (\$12.84) an hour for such activities. If the work requires guidance, it is seen as a daily activity rather than labor, meaning an employee may not receive even food in exchange for hours of work. Some disability rights organizations noted that, because work and wage requirements are set by collective bargaining agreements, there are limited incentives to create work opportunities for persons with physical or intellectual disabilities, exacerbating structural barriers to employment and leading to situations where persons with intellectual disabilities were not paid for their work.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman and university administrators noted rising harassment and violent online hate speech directed at those working in diversity and inclusion offices or in spaces dedicated to inclusive workplaces.

On February 18, the District Court of Southwest Finland found Finns Party

politician and deputy councilor of the Turku City Council Jyrki Aland guilty on two counts of ethnic agitation. In 2019 and 2021, Aland posted videos to Facebook making threats against immigrant-background taxi drivers and stating he hoped immigrants living in certain districts of Turku would die. The court sentenced Aland to a fine of €1,200 (\$1,284), based on the severity of the crime and his income level. The court ruled both videos did not fall under the protection of freedom of speech as were directly threatening and constituted hate speech.

Religious community leaders stated debates on religious practices of animal slaughter with respect to kosher and halal products and on nonmedical male circumcision used direct or veiled antisemitic and anti-Muslim language. In September, the government submitted a draft animal welfare law to parliament that would mandate stunning of animals before slaughter, restricting domestic production of kosher and halal products. While leaders of religious communities stated the overall law may not be motivated by religious animus, they stated discourse in the public and in government included harmful misinformation and stereotypes. The European Commission Coordinator on Combatting Antisemitism stated neither authorities nor the public were aware of the extent or impact of societal antisemitic, anti-Roma, and anti-Muslim sentiment in the country. Materials produced by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health for immigrant communities called nonmedical male circumcision an abuse of child bodily integrity and self-determination.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law provides for the right to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The law prohibits antiunion discrimination and requires reinstatement of workers fired for union activity.

The government effectively enforced all applicable laws protecting the freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike for workers. Workers without permanent residence may not be eligible to join voluntary unemployment insurance funds. Employers who violate the rights of employees to organize and retain employee representatives may face administrative measures, legal

proceedings, and fines. The penalties were generally commensurate with those under other laws involving denials of civil rights. Penalties were regularly applied against violators. Authorities and employers generally respected freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and there were no reports of abuses. All workers, regardless of sector union membership or nationality, are entitled to the same wages negotiated between employers and trade unions provided for in applicable collective agreements.

An official dispute board may make nonbinding recommendations to the cabinet on ending or limiting the duration of strikes when they threaten national security. Employees prohibited from striking may use arbitration to provide for due process in the resolution of their concerns.

On September 19, in response to a proposed strike by nurses, parliament passed emergency legislation to prevent the strike because it would endanger lives. The Helsinki District Court accepted requests from three hospital districts for a temporary measure that would prohibit intensive care unit (ICU) nurses from striking. The court did not determine whether ICU nurses have a right to strike but stated any decision to strike must consider the right to health and life according to the constitution.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits and criminalizes all forms of forced or compulsory labor. The government effectively enforced the law. Penalties for forced or compulsory labor depend on the severity of the crime and were generally commensurate with those for similar crimes. Despite strong penalties for violations, some cases of persons subjected to conditions of forced labor in the country were reported.

Men and women working in the cleaning, agriculture, restaurant, construction, and car wash and repair industries were the most likely to face conditions of forced labor. From January 1 through August 31, Victim Support Finland, an NGO, supported 745 clients, including 231 additional clients, who had been the victims of human trafficking, labor exploitation, or related crimes.

Also see the Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits all the worst forms of child labor. The law provides for employment contracts for children between ages of 15 and 18 as long as the work does not interrupt compulsory education. Children between ages of 15 and 18 may not work after 10 p.m. or under conditions that risk their health and safety, which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health defined as working with mechanical, chemical, physical, or biological hazards or bodily strain that may result from lifting heavy loads. A child whose 14th birthday occurs during the existing calendar year may be employed in light work, such as selling refreshments, running errands, or assisting in an office setting, for no more than half of the school holidays or during short-term duties during the school year.

Penalties for violations of child labor regulations are commensurate with those for other analogous similar crimes. There were no reported violations during the year. Child labor violations carry a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment for occupational safety offenses and six months' imprisonment for working time protection offenses. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment effectively enforced child labor regulations.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The law broadly prohibits employment discrimination. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has the responsibility to supervise the implementation of nondiscrimination laws in employment while the Ombudsman for Equality has the mandate to supervise the implementation of laws concerning gender equality, gender identity, and gender expression matters. The Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for developing antidiscrimination policies and legislation concerning equality, gender identity, and gender expression matters. The government effectively enforced applicable laws against employment discrimination, but instances of employment discrimination occurred. Penalties for violations are commensurate with those for other similar crimes. A person who has been discriminated against is entitled to receive compensation from the employer who has discriminated against the victim proportionate to the severity of the act. Penalties were rarely applied against violators.

OSHA received 570 reports of workplace discrimination in 2021. Of the 134 reports that resulted in further inspection, 46 resulted in findings the employer had acted in breach of the prohibition on discrimination. For these cases, 53 percent concerned the state of health, and 21 percent concerned ethnicity, nationality, or language. Cases related to disability, religion, family relationships and sexual orientation made up relatively few of the investigated discrimination cases. In 2021, the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality received 236 reports by telephone or written complaint concerning gender-based discrimination (see section 6, Women).

According to the Human Rights Center and the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman's office, discrimination in job recruitment continued to be a significant problem, especially in cases where applicants had "non-Finnish" names. The Nondiscrimination Ombudsman highlighted discrimination against individuals with Slavic names, including Ukrainian nationals and Finnish nationals with Russian-sounding names. OSHA performed 78 inspections in 2021, the latest year for which data are available, of employer obligations to promote equality in the workplace and observed violations in more than one-half of these inspections.

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the gender pay gap is a pressing and persistent problem. Statistics Finland's *Index of Wage and Salary Earnings 2021*, the latest year for which data are available, states the average earnings of women are 84 percent of the average earnings of men across all labor sectors. A report from the Ombudsman for Equality's office published in January described a case in which a female doctor and a male doctor engaged in the same work or work of equal value received different salary increases despite the doctors. The female doctor received a lower salary increase. The Office of the Ombudsman for Equality found that the female doctor had the right to an equivalent salary within a reasonable period of time.

The government's family leave reform entered into force on August 1. The law recognizes diverse family situations, various forms of entrepreneurship, and self-employment with the aim of allowing families to have more opportunities, freedom of choice, and flexibility to take parental leave. Under the law, the employee may not be given notice of termination while pregnant. The Ombudsman for Equality highlighted the law as a key step to increase equality in working life, to take better

account of different types of families, and to reduce gender-based discrimination (see also section 6, Women).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Wages and Hour Laws: While there is no national minimum wage law, the law requires all employers, including nonunionized employers, to pay the minimum wages stipulated in collective bargaining agreements.

The standard workweek established by law is no more than 40 hours of work per week with eight hours work per day. Because the law does not include a provision regarding a five-day workweek, regular work hours may, at least in principle, span six days. The regular weekly work hours may also be arranged so that the average is 40 hours during a period of no more than 52 weeks. Persons in certain occupations, such as seamen, household workers, road transport workers, and workers in bakeries, are subject to separate workweek regulations. The law entitles employees working shifts or during the weekend to one 24-hour rest period per week. The law limits a worker to 250 hours of overtime per year and 138 overtime hours in any four-month period.

Occupational Safety and Health: Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards are appropriate for the main industries in the country, and OSH experts actively identified unsafe conditions. Workers may remove themselves from situations that endanger health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. The law requires employees to report any hazards or risks they discover in working conditions, including in machinery, equipment, or work methods. The law also requires employees, where possible, to correct dangerous conditions that come to their attention. Such corrective measures must be reported to the employer.

Foreign seasonal berry pickers do not always have the same legal employment protections as other workers. In many cases, berry pickers and wild produce pickers were classified as entrepreneurs, not employees. Entrepreneurs in a nonemployment relationship lack wage, hour, and safety protections provided for by labor law and collective bargaining agreements. According to interviews with berry pickers and observers within the government, while changes to laws in 2021 set minimum standards for accommodation, training, and transportation of wild

produce pickers, living conditions and OSH matters continued to lack appropriate regulation and oversight.

Labor activists, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, and berry pickers stated 2021 changes to the laws regarding foreigners picking natural products were not sufficient to prevent exploitation and unsafe work and living conditions for foreign workers. Some workers reported operators continued to charge for training, transport, and recruitment services or that operators and subcontractors shifted recruitment and training fees to housing and equipment fees.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement: Authorities effectively enforced wage, overtime, and OSH laws. Penalties for work safety offenses, working hour offenses, exploitive work discrimination, and other wage and hour violations are specified in the criminal code. Penalties for aggravated cases include a fine or imprisonment up to two years, commensurate with fraud and negligence penalties. Government resources, inspections, and penalties were adequate to deter most violations. Violations carry a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment for OSH offenses and six months' imprisonment for working time protection offenses. Penalties were regularly applied against violators.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for enforcement of labor laws and regulations. In addition, OSHA enforces appropriate safety and health standards and conducts inspections at workplaces. Individuals who commit work safety or working hours' offenses are subject to penalties commensurate with similar crimes. The OSH authorities inform employers of inspections in advance unless a surprise inspection is necessary for enforcement purposes. A subsequent inspection report gives employers written advice on how to remedy minor defects. In cases of serious violations, the inspector issues an improvement notice and monitors the employer's compliance. When necessary, OSHA may issue a binding decision and impose a fine. If a hazardous situation involves a risk to life, an inspector may halt work on the site or issue a prohibition notice concerning the source of risk. Inspectors have the authority to make unannounced inspections. In 2021, inspectors issued a total of more than 4,900 improvement notices for minor risks or hazards. If the employer fails to comply with an improvement notice, OSHA may impose a conditional fine, a notice of termination, or a notice of suspension to enforce the obligation. The number of labor inspectors was

sufficient to enforce compliance. There are 40 inspectors who concentrate on foreign labor, a group especially vulnerable to OSH and wage violations.

In January the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment appointed a new advisory board to combat the exploitation of foreign labor. The advisory board includes representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the anti-human trafficking coordinator, among others. In March, OSHA released a report on the supervision of the use of foreign labor that noted many deficiencies. Inspectors identified a growing number of cases in which a genuine employment relationship had been intentionally mischaracterized or disguised as entrepreneurship or a commission agreement without the knowledge or understanding of the employee. Inspectors noted high rates of violations in construction, car repair shops, and car washes.

Because the law considers wild berry pickers as entrepreneurs not in a wage employment relationship, these workers are vulnerable to exploitation, and violations of wage or safety laws of foreigners picking natural products are therefore undercounted in statistics of labor supervision violations. The law does not stipulate minimum wage or minimum earnings for berry pickers. While the law requires a minimum purchase price be known to the picker before arriving in the country, some workers reported they were not informed in advance of a minimum purchase price or that purchase prices changed below previously stated minimums. During the year, more than 4,000 Thai berry pickers worked in the country during the berry picking season.

On January 26, the Supreme Court found the owner of a berry company guilty of 26 counts of trafficking in persons and aggravated fraud concerning the treatment of berry and mushroom pickers recruited from Thailand. The court stated the accommodations of the berry pickers were dangerous, the berry pickers incurred debts from training and travel costs that left them with no ability to cover the cost of their essential needs, and the level of earnings of the berry pickers was less than the amount the company told berry pickers they would receive. On October 27, *Helsingin Sanomat* reported the central criminal police had arrested Olli Sorainen, an advisor at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, on suspicion of aggravated acceptance of a bribe and aggravated abuse of public office concerning the facilitation of human trafficking and wage theft of berry pickers from Thailand

between 2020 and 2022. Labor activists and observers noted that because law defines wild berry pickers as entrepreneurs, there are limited established oversight mechanisms to protect berry pickers and, as raised by the court, Thai berry pickers, who do not speak Finnish and are dependent on the Finnish companies and compound personnel while in the country, often have no knowledge of their rights under the law, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

Occupational safety and health authorities performed 640 inspections related to discrimination in the workplace related to foreign labor and found 73 cases of discrimination in pay or other minimum terms and conditions of labor. OSHA highlighted that these statistics may undercount actual cases of discrimination or pay violations as in many inspections there were inadequate or missing working time records.